



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by Professor Emmanuel Decaux

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 16, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In addition to subscribing fully to the statement read on behalf of the 14 invoking states, I would like to add the following:

We join in welcoming Professor Decaux to the Permanent Council as the OSCE Rapporteur for the Moscow Mechanism. We thank him for his comprehensive report documenting his fact-finding mission.

Like others at this table, the United States remains deeply concerned by the events that have taken place in Belarus since December 19, 2010.

The Moscow Mechanism Rapporteur's report contains a number of constructive recommendations that can help Belarus better fulfill its OSCE commitments.

The OSCE and the international community should focus on the concerns raised in the report. To do so requires that we all remain engaged with the people of Belarus.

Mr. Chairman, the United States would be pleased to see closer cooperation between Belarus and the OSCE on a wide range of issues.

The government of Belarus has, on repeated occasions, declared its willingness to cooperate with the OSCE. The Belarus delegation here has repeatedly promised to present a proposed program of cooperation.

Yet, the mandate for the OSCE Office in Minsk was not extended. The Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, has not been allowed to visit Belarus since the events of December 19. Likewise, a fact-finding mission by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Working Group on Belarus was rejected and the Chair of the OSCE PA Working Group was denied a visa to observe the trials of the political prisoners. While the presence of a limited ODIHR trial monitoring team is welcomed, we believe a more meaningful OSCE presence in Belarus is needed.

Furthermore, human rights defenders from Russia and Ukraine attempting to monitor, report, and advise the Government of Belarus on the human rights situation have been targeted for expulsion or banned from reentering Belarus. Mr. Lukashenko has called for the expulsion of foreign media from Belarus, and at least one journalist from Russia has been expelled.

U.S. policy remains clear. We urge the Government of Belarus to study closely the Rapporteur's recommendations. The OSCE, its institutions, and the international community at large are standing by to help the people of Belarus. As the Rapporteur's report recommends, Belarus should fully implement its international commitments. Special attention should be paid to its commitments to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including media freedom, prohibiting torture, and upholding the rule of law.

Likewise, Belarus should cooperate with the OSCE on legal and judicial review. This should include review of the trials related to the events of December 19, which my government has consistently condemned. As we have said, their results should be reversed and the government should develop a judicial system based on international standards of due process.

Mr. Chairman, we once again call on the Government of Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners and cease continuing human rights violations against critics of the government, who remain at risk of harassment and arbitrary arrest.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.